

communities, Christians and other religious minorities, and to the rule of law in Europe and Eurasia. We must remain vigilant and ensure that the United States, as an original participating State of the OSCE, strongly supports the OSCE's efforts to ensure European Jewish communities are safe and secure, that Christians and other religious minorities are free to fully practice their faith, and that the rule of law prevails.

RECOGNIZING LIFELONG EDUCATOR DR. AUBREY W. BONNETT

HON. KATHLEEN M. RICE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 12, 2016

Miss RICE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Dr. Aubrey W. Bonnett, a resident of New York's Fourth Congressional District and a life-long educator.

Throughout his 43-year career in higher education, Dr. Bonnett has achieved tremendous success as a scholar of immigration, race, sociology and diasporic studies, particularly with relation to our nation's vibrant African American, West Indian and Caribbean communities.

Dr. Bonnett currently serves as a professor emeritus in the department of American Studies at the State University of New York (SUNY)—Old Westbury, where he also previously served as the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost. Dr. Bonnett is also the dean emeritus of the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences at the California State University—San Bernardino and was the first black Dean hired at the University. Having authored and coauthored four books and more than one hundred scholarly articles, Dr. Bonnett is truly one of the preeminent sociologists in the state of New York. Dr. Bonnett has dedicated his life to exploring and shedding light on the immigrant experience in the United States, and as a native of British Guyana, he is a testament to the incredible and critical contributions that immigrants have made to American academia.

I'd like to congratulate Dr. Bonnett on his retirement and on an incredible career. It is truly an honor to serve as his representative in Congress.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RUBEN GALLEG0

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 12, 2016

Mr. GALLEG0. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and was not present for one roll call vote on Tuesday, February 9, 2016. Had I been present, I would have voted in this manner:

Roll Call Vote Number 64—9/11 Memorial Act—yes.

HONORING LAURIE HARKNESS, PH.D., ON THE OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 12, 2016

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to join the many family, friends, and colleagues who have gathered as Dr. Laurie Harkness, founder and Director of the VA Connecticut Healthcare System's Errera Community Care Center, celebrates her retirement after decades of dedicated service to our community's veterans.

To say that Laurie is a remarkable public servant is an understatement. During her tenure with the VA Connecticut Healthcare System, Laurie has demonstrated an unparalleled commitment to ensuring that our veterans are receiving the best possible care and have access to the programs, services, and resources they need to live healthy, independent, fulfilling lives. While her contributions to veterans care are innumerable, the most well-known is the Errera Community Care Center which she founded more than twenty years ago.

Over the course of its history, the Errera Center has evolved into one of the leading centers of innovation in psychosocial rehabilitation and in the integration of the psychosocial and biomedical approaches. Serving veterans struggling with mental illness and/or substance abuse disorders, homelessness, and/or aging, the team of multidisciplinary mental health professionals at the Errera Center work together to provide an array of community-based rehabilitative programs including day and crisis intervention programs, vocational programs, housing programs, homeless outreach and advocacy and case management programs. Providing a myriad of support to hundreds of veterans every year, the Errera Center has been nationally recognized for its exceptional model of care that emphasizes evidenced-based clinical programs provided in conjunction with a comprehensive network of community partnerships and repeatedly been awarded status as a VA Center of Excellence for the Care of Individuals with Mental Illness.

Laurie's work has also been recognized with numerous local, state and national awards and recognitions. She is the recipient of the Olin E. Teague Award, the highest VA clinical award given, as well as the distinguished Eli Lilly Lifetime Achievement Award for her work in developing programs that assist veterans with serious mental illnesses reintegrate back into their own communities. She has been recognized by Vietnam Veterans of America for her service and dedication to Vietnam veterans and their families and was awarded the "Excellence in Community Mental Health Services" award from NAMI, the first non-MD recipient and first VA employee to be so honored. Her legacy of service will serve as a standard for which to strive for generations to come.

I would be remiss if I did not extend a personal note of thanks to Laurie for her many years of guidance and assistance. Over my tenure in Congress, Laurie has been an invaluable resource for myself, my staff, and my constituents. Her expertise, compassion, and leadership has made all the difference and I consider myself fortunate to have had so many opportunities to work with her.

Laurie Harkness is a reflection of the very best in public service and her presence will certainly be missed by all of those fortunate enough to have worked with her as well as the countless veterans who have benefitted from her outstanding work. Today, as she reflects on her career with the VA, she can be proud of the indelible mark she has left on the agency. It is my great honor to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Laurie as she celebrates her retirement and extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to her for her many years of service. I wish her all the best for many more years of health and happiness as she enjoys her retirement.

HONORING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS FOUNDATION, INCORPORATED & THE 1976 CLASS OF THE CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

HON. G.K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 12, 2016

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 40th Anniversary of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Incorporated (CBCF) and the 1976 Class of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC). Established in 1976, this non-profit, non-partisan education and research institution was founded by Nira Hardon Long, Albert L. Nellum and Congresswoman Yvonne B. Burke (CA). The CBCF's commitment to advancing the global black community by developing leaders, informing policy, and educating the public has not wavered and will remain steadfast for many years to come.

One of the CBCF's innovative initiatives is its virtual library project called 'Avoice.' Avoice: African American Voices in Congress launched in 2006 and has received over 27 million hits to date. Through this virtual portal people from around the world log onto the Avoice website to find out about the legislative work done by African American members of Congress.

The CBCF and the CBC have collaborated for many years on policy issues that would uplift the African American community in the United States including major laws like the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and legislation that created the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday. Even before the CBCF or CBC were created, African American members of Congress, black civil rights leaders, and others have been on the forefront advocating for criminal justice reform, environmental justice, voting rights protection, and economic empowerment for African Americans.

Mr. Speaker, when CBCF was founded in 1976, there were 17 members of the Congressional Black Caucus Congress who stood together to empower America's neglected citizens and to address their legislative concerns.

These members are—former Representatives Yvonne B. Burke (CA), Shirley A. Chisholm (NY), William Clay, Sr. (MO), Cardiss W. Collins (IL), Charles C. Diggs, Jr. (MI), Ron Dellums (CA), Harold Ford, Sr. (TN), Augustus F. Hawkins (CA), Barbara C. Jordan (TX), Ralph H. Metcalfe (IL), Parren J. Mitchell (MD), Robert N.C. Nix, Sr. (PA), Louis Stokes